

Land and Water Resources Council
Minutes
September 8, 2005 Meeting

Members present: Martha Freeman, Chair, Director, State Planning Office (SPO); Paul Jacques (for Roland Martin, Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (DIFW)); Deirdre Gilbert (for George Lapointe, Commissioner of Marine Resources (DMR)); Bob Marvinney (for Pat McGowan, Commissioner of Conservation (DOC)); and Deb Garrett (for Dawn Gallagher, Commissioner of Environmental Protection (DEP))

Staff: Steve Timpano, DIFW; and Todd Burrowes, SPO

Others: David Bell, Maine Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine

I. Welcome. Chair Martha Freeman welcomed those in attendance and opened the meeting.

II. Minutes. The Council unanimously approved the minutes of its June 16, 2005 meeting as drafted.

III. Groundwater Study. With reference to previously distributed material, Bob Marvinney provided an overview of the proposed work plan and schedule for the groundwater policy study assigned to the Council by PL 2005 c. 452. Mr. Marvinney explained that the study legislation requires the Council to:

- review current state laws regulating groundwater withdrawal, existing scientific information regarding groundwater resources in Maine and the adequacy of state law to prevent undue adverse effects on those resources;
- identify and assess criteria regarding whether and how the State manages groundwater withdrawals;
- make recommendations for any legislation deemed advisable; and
- assess the cost on state government and private parties of those recommended changes.

The study legislation identifies MGS as the lead agency on behalf of the Council. The work plan presented by Mr. Marvinney proposed a series of roughly monthly meetings to address the topics identified in the law and inform a draft report to be presented to the LWRC in October 2006 in anticipation of the Council's report to the Legislature in November 2006. Mr. Marvinney explained that he is currently communicating with potential stakeholder representatives to participate on the study's advisory group and organizing a preparatory meeting among state agencies. Mr. Marvinney also noted that the law calls for legislators to serve on the advisory group. Paul Jacques suggested that

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DIFW be included among the agencies working on the study and that a letter to the pertinent committee chairs, copied to legislative leadership, may be an appropriate means to request identification of legislators to participate in the study.

Following discussion, the Council approved the draft work plan, with the understanding that DIFW would be included among the study participants and MGS would prepare draft letters from the Council chair to prospective advisory group participants and pertinent legislative committees.

IV. Bay Management. The update on the bay management study was postponed until the Council's December meeting. The next project steering committee meeting is scheduled for mid-November.

V. Invasive Species. Todd Burrowes reported that, following up on the outcome of a prior Council discussion, SPO convened an interagency meeting among state agency staff working on invasive species issues to identify potential gaps in state efforts and to discuss issues and opportunities for further coordination and related improvement of state efforts in this area, including potentially establishment of an all-media, all-taxa state invasive species council. This group included Roy Bouchard and John McPhedran, DEP; Pete Thayer and Linda Mercer, DMR; Peter Borque, DIFW; Ann Gibbs, Department of Agriculture; Molly Dockerty, DOC; Bob LaRoche, MDOT; and Dave Struble, DOC/Maine Forest Service. Mr. Burrowes presented the group's primary suggestions to the Council. There was general consensus regarding the following basic gaps in state invasive species efforts:

- baseline data regarding the marine environment and wetlands, in particular;
- identification and clarification of vectors (sources) of invasive species, increased knowledge regarding which might be useful in prioritizing and coordinating efforts;
- resources (staff positions as well as funding) needed to maintain and expand existing efforts; and
- additional capacity for outreach to educate and enlist the help of citizen scientists and volunteers as an efficient means to supplement and expand in-state efforts.

Meeting participants also noted an increase in questions and concerns from the public regarding invasive species issues. DEP and DMR staff explained that legislation enacted last session (Resolves 2005 c. 43) directs the agencies to address issues regarding invasive species vectors and related topics and that further discussion of these issues in the Legislature next session is probable. DEP and DMR noted that work called for the legislation is getting underway.

Mr. Burrowes also related that there was general consensus among meeting participants that creation of an all taxa state invasive species council, particularly in the

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absence of additional resources to organize and administer it, did not seem to be a priority or promising means to address the identified gaps. There was general consensus that the increased use of ad hoc technical groups (organized by state staff) to address specific issues of concern to multiple agencies would be useful and that an informal interagency annual meeting would be a good tool to help ensure necessary communications and identify any policy issues to present to the Council or other decision makers. Moreover, there was general consensus that outreach to educate and enlist the help of citizen scientists and volunteers may be an efficient and effective strategy given scarce resources.

In response to the group's point about the value of outreach and citizen-volunteer efforts, Council chair Martha Freeman suggested exploration of how existing state public service announcements and related education and outreach efforts (particularly TV ads) might be improved to better inform and enlist public involvement. Paul Jacques offered to serve as a point of contact and coordinate agency suggestions on this topic. In addition, Mr. Jacques noted that DIFW lacks the capacity to address invasive species that the agency now faces and is considering legislation to address the problem.

VI. Adjourn. There being no further business, the chair adjourned the meeting.